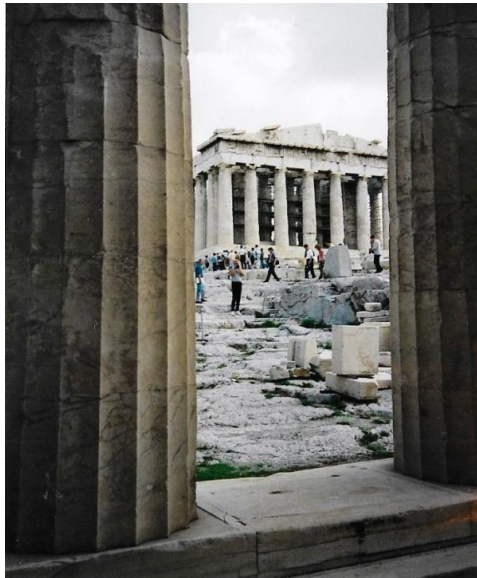


Josef Fischer

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Welfare services for  
disabled veterans and  
surviving dependents in  
Classical Athens



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Kraków 2017

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## Introduction

War<sup>1</sup> was an integral part of many people's lives in the ancient world. Numerous Athenian citizens participated actively in armed conflicts and risked their lives and health. Many of them fell in the battles or paid for their commitment with wounds and sometimes with the irreversible loss of their health. Fallen soldiers meant not only a loss of military potential and manpower for their hometown; their fate caused considerable social and economic difficulties for their surviving dependents. The same was true for war invalids, who probably were not an uncommon sight in the ancient cities. Therefore the ancient communities were obliged to ease the fate of disabled veterans and the bereaved, whose husbands, fathers and/or sons had been killed fighting for the fatherland. In fact, even though there was, of course, no systematic social policy in the modern sense in ancient times, there were appropriate initiatives in Classical Athens, which shall be presented in this paper.

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\* This paper was presented at the Tenth Symposium of the Melammu Project „Societies at War” at the University of Kassel in 2016. A German version of this paper was presented at the symposium „Medizin & Militär. Wundversorgung und Verwundetenfürsorge von den Anfängen bis zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge“ at Hainburg in September 2015. It will be published in the proceedings of this conference. I would like to thank Prof. Kurt Raaflaub and Prof. Oliver Stoll for helpful comments on my paper.

<sup>1</sup> The study of the war in classical antiquity has experienced a huge boom in recent years. The relevant literature has, therefore, become almost unmanageable. A very good introduction to this topic is provided by Schulz, 2012, or Mann, 2013. Burckhardt, 2008, or Sidebottom, 2008, give very concise introductions. A basis for any further study is also Campbell et al., 2013. Especially on Greece see van Wees, 2004. Morris, 2013, and Eich, 2015, provide some provoking thoughts and fresh insights, but are not always convincing.

## Disabled veterans

According to our sources, a remarkable support for war invalids was introduced in Athens<sup>2</sup> already in the archaic age. Plutarchus states in his *Life of Solon* that the Athenian tyrant Peisistratus introduced a rent for disabled veterans, who should be maintained at the public charge, thus following the example of Solon, who is said to have done so earlier for a certain Thersippus (Plut. Solon 31):

*He also made other laws himself, one of which provides that those who are maimed in war shall be maintained at the public charge. But Heracleides says that even before that Solon had caused a decree to be passed to this effect in the case of Thersippus, who had been so maimed, and that Peisistratus was following his example.*<sup>3</sup>

But of course, we have to be quite sceptical about this information concerning the early date of the introduction of the rent for invalids.<sup>4</sup> Without any doubt, there existed such a pension in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and it was not only for war invalids, but for every invalid citizen, provided that he was so severely disabled, that he

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<sup>2</sup> Nothing is known about similar schemes in other cities. An initiative for the care for wounded veterans is attributed to Alexander the Great, who dismissed disabled soldiers and long-serving veterans of the Macedonian Army, providing them with one talent and bestowing special honours upon them, like the prohedry in the theatre, in order to secure their social reintegration. In addition, Alexander is said to have ordered that the orphans of those soldiers, who had lost their lives during the campaign, should receive their dead fathers' wages (Arrian, *anab.* 7, 8-12; Plut. *Alex* 71). In early imperial Rome, there were benefits for disabled veterans (*causarii*). See Graßl, 1985, on the *causarii*.

<sup>3</sup> Translation by B. Perrin.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarchus was not only writing in Roman Imperial times, but he also was a philosopher and not a historian, thus being more interested in portraying characters than in historical facts.

could not work.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the granting of this pension was tied to the prohibition to possess a fortune of more than three minae, and the health status of the holders of this pension were regularly reviewed by the city council, as the pseudo-Aristotelian *Athenaion politeia* reports (49, 4):

*The Council also inspects the incapables; for there is a law enacting that persons possessing less than 3 minae and incapacitated by bodily infirmity from doing any work are to be inspected by the Council, which is to give them a grant for food at the public expense at the rate of 2 obols a day each. And there is a treasurer for these persons, elected by lot.*<sup>6</sup>

Once this allowance was granted, it could also be withdrawn again, if the eligibility requirements had changed, if – for example – the health status of the invalid had improved, or if there had been an improvement of the financial circumstances. That apparently regular checks of eligibility were carried out, is evident because of a passage in the speech *Against Timarchos* by Aeschines, where we learn that a blind old man named Arignotos lost his disability pension, because he had missed such an examination.<sup>7</sup> Apart from these regular inspections, additional checks of entitlement could occur, if someone pressed charges for illegally drawing the pension. This was the case in our most important source for this rent, which is the 24<sup>th</sup> speech of the orator Lysias from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. His unnamed client

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<sup>5</sup> On disabled people in antiquity in general see Graßl, 1988, Garland, 1995, Fischer, 2015. Specifically on disabled in Greek antiquity see Mehl, 1996, Rose 2003. On the Athenian pension for invalids see Fischer, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Translation by F. G. Kenyon.

<sup>7</sup> Aeschin. Tim. 104: *Finally – and most shameful of all – when the old man's name had been omitted at a revision of the list of pauper-pensioners, and he had laid a petition before the senate to have his dole restored, the defendant, who was a member of the senate, and one of the presiding officers that day, did not deign to speak for him, but let him lose his monthly pension.* (Translation by C. D. Adams). Aeschines speaks here of τὸν τῆς πρυτανείας μισθόν, which gives a hint that the payment was made prytany by prytany (= one tenth of a year).

was obviously accused to collect that state disability allowance, even though he was perfectly capable to work and to earn his own living. This speech, which was held by the defendant himself in court, shows us in a unique way the perspective of an invalid in Classical Athens. Unfortunately, we don't know the outcome of the trial.

But how much money did invalids get? At the time of Lysias, it was one obol per day, at the time of Aristotle already two obols, and again a generation later, about 300 BC, it was already five obols, as a fragment by the historian Philochorus (FGrHist 328 f 197b) shows.<sup>8</sup> So the rent gradually increased over time during the 4<sup>th</sup> century. But were these sums at any time high enough to ensure the livelihood of an adult or even his family? As comparative data show, these sums allowed an invalid merely to survive, but they were probably too low to cover all the living expenses of one person, not to mention a whole family. The criterion that recipients of the pension were not allowed to work is thus relativized. Rather, the majority of disabled people probably had to earn extra money,<sup>9</sup> or they were dependent on the support of their families.

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<sup>8</sup> See Lys. 24, 13; 26; Ath. pol. 49, 4 (quoted above); FGrHist 328 F 197b. In another source, namely the Byzantine encyclopedia of Harpokration, the sum of nine drachmae per month is attributed to Philochorus, which is a bit less than the amount of two obols a day, as bequeathed by Aristotle: FGrHist 328 F 197a.

<sup>9</sup> Of course, the possibilities to pursue a professional career were quite limited for disabled people, depending on the severity of their disability. Unfortunately, the sources portray only a few fates of people with disabilities in more detail, so that it is difficult to describe typical occupations of disabled people. But they could be encountered in a variety of fields, in agriculture and crafts as well as in the household. Sometimes they worked as artists, like the blind from birth poet and singer Xenokritos from Locri (of course, the blind singer was a stereotype since Homer), or the lame composer and musician Dorion (Ath. 8, 338a). In addition, we know disabled athletes, like the mute athlete from Samos named Echeklous or Echebles, who allegedly obtained his voice again, when they wanted to take advantage of him (Gell. 5, 9, 5f.). Of course, these two examples provided by Athenaios and Aulus Gellius are quite anecdotic and must be considered with scepticism. But anyway, much depended in turn on whether the family

## War orphans

But what happened, if a warrior did not return from the battle? What happened with his children, with his wife and his parents?<sup>10</sup> Basically, every orphan<sup>11</sup> was under the custody of a guardian (ἐπίτροπος), who was either appointed by the father personally or testamentary or was selected by the archon. There were no regulations or limitations concerning the choice or the number of guardians; and it was quite customary that an orphan had several such guardians. The ἐπίτροπος had to pay for the livelihood (σῆτος) of the orphan, was responsible for his education, represented the orphan in court and managed his assets through adolescence.

Boys reached their majority age when they became 18 and their names were inscribed into the lists of the demes; then the accounts were settled and their fortune was handed over to them in front of witnesses. Whether the guardians met their obligations appropriately, was monitored in Athens by the council of the ὀρφανοφύλακες or ὀρφανισταί.<sup>12</sup> If orphans were treated unjustly, the guardians could

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or patrons could provide the disabled child or young people with a special training. On disability and work in antiquity see Graßl, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> As far as I know, the situation of surviving dependents in Classical antiquity has not been treated systematically so far. Nevertheless, there are valuable studies on single categories of people. On widows and orphans in antiquity in general see Weiler, 1980. On widows and orphans in Greek antiquity see Weiler, 1988, and Cudjoe, 2010. Generally on the family in ancient Greece see Lacey, 1983, and now also Schmitz, 2007. On widows and orphans in the Roman world see the extensive studies of Krause, 1994-1995.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the case of Diodotos, discussed below in note 32. In the ninth book of his *Laws*, Plato considers the laws concerning orphans and their guardians as the most important contracts between humans (Plat. Nom. 922a). Accordingly, the philosopher pays much attention to orphans (Plat. nom. 927a-928D). Compare also the praise of the legislation concerning orphans in the Athens speech of Aelius Aristides (Ael. Arist. Panath. 50).

<sup>12</sup> See. Xen. vect. 2, 7. These offices are also elsewhere testified, for example in Delphi, Sparta, Ephesus, Naupactus, Histria and Gorgippia. See Weiler, 1988, 27.



be brought to court by any citizen without any risk. Likewise, the orphans could even sue their former guardians up to five years after reaching their majority. As supreme authority, the eponymous archon was responsible for the matters of orphans (if they were Athenian citizens), as the *Constitution of the Athenians* tells:

*Criminal and civil law-suits are instituted before him, and after a preliminary trial he brings them in before the jury-court: actions for ill-usage of parents (in which anybody who wishes may act as prosecutor without liability to penalty); for ill-usage of orphans (which lie against their guardians); for ill-usage of an heiress (which lie against the guardians or the relations that they live with); for injury to an orphan's estate (these also lie against the guardians); prosecutions for insanity, when one man accuses another of wasting his property when insane; actions for the appointment of liquidators, when a man is unwilling for property to be administered in partnership; actions for the institution of guardianship; actions for deciding rival claims to guardianship; actions for the production of goods or documents; actions for enrolment as trustee; claims to estates and to heiresses. He also supervises orphans and heiresses and women professing to be with child after the husband's death, and he has absolute power to fine offenders against them or to bring them before the Jury-court. He grants leases of houses belonging to orphans and heiresses until they are fourteen years of age, and receives the rents, and he exacts maintenance for children from guardians who fail to supply it.<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> Translation by F. G. Kenyon. If the orphans were metics, the *polemarchus* was in charge of their affairs (Ath. pol. 58). Compare also the Demosthenic Speech Against Makartatos (43, 75): *Let the archon take charge of orphans and of heiresses and of families that are becoming extinct, and of all women who remain in the houses of their deceased husbands, declaring that they are pregnant. Let him take charge of these, and not suffer anyone to do any outrage to them. And if anyone shall commit any outrage or any lawless act against them, he shall have power to impose a fine upon such person up to the limit fixed by law. And if the offender shall seem to him to be deserving*

If a man died without a male heir, but with a daughter, there were special regulations. In this case, the daughter became an ἐπίκληρος<sup>14</sup> and had to marry her nearest male relative, to whom the whole property was passed over. If this relative did not marry her, he had to get her married to somebody else, providing her with a dowry, just as if she was his own daughter. The obligation to marry the next male relative generally was valid even if the ἐπίκληρος or her nearest male relative were already married; they could then be forced to divorce. Of course, such claims were not always asserted, for example, if the heiress already had a son, who could inherit the fortune of his grandfather. Like the orphans, the ἐπίκληροι were also under the special protection of the eponymous archon or the *polemarchus*.

These regulations apply to all orphans in Athens.<sup>15</sup> For the children of fallen warriors additional extraordinary regulations are bequeathed. Diogenes Laertius reports in his biography of Solon, that a law concerning the maintenance and education of the children of fallen warriors at government expense was already enacted in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Diog. Laert. 1, 55). As in the case of the disability pension, such an early introduction of this measure has been questioned. Certainly, a special support of orphans of fallen warriors

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*of a more severe punishment, let him summon such a person, giving him five days' notice, and bring him before the court of Heliaea, writing upon the indictment the penalty which he thinks is deserved. And if there be a conviction, let the court of Heliaea appoint for the one convicted what penalty he ought to suffer or pay.* (Translation: A. T. Murray)

<sup>14</sup> On the Athenian ἐπίκληρος see for example Lacey, 1983, 131-136. Cantarella, 2005; Maffi, 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Outside of Athens, measures to care for orphans have allegedly been taken by Charondas of Katane (as Diod. 12, 15 reports in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC about the legendary Sicilian lawgiver), who is said to have ordered that the assets of orphans should be managed by her paternal relatives, while the children themselves should grow up with their maternal relatives. Likewise, in the city law of Gortyn on Crete arrangements were made for the protection of the property of orphans (III 17 ff.). For early Crete is also reported that orphans were allowed to participate in the common meals, the *syssitia* (Ath. 4, 143e).

existed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>16</sup> It is mentioned in Pericles' famous *Funeral Oration* of the year 431 BC, which is recorded by Thucydides in book two of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*.<sup>17</sup> He lets the Athenian statesman announce at the end of this oration, that the city would raise the sons of the fallen at public expense until they reach manhood (Thuc. 2, 46, 1):

*My task is now finished. I have performed it to the best of my ability, and in words, at least, the requirements of the law are now satisfied. If deeds be in question, those who are here interred have received part of their honours already, and for the rest, their children will be brought up till manhood at the public expense: the state thus offers a valuable prize, as the garland of victory in this race of valour, for the reward both of those who have fallen and their survivors. And where the rewards for merit are greatest, there are found the best citizens. And now that you have brought to a close your lamentations for your relatives, you may depart.*<sup>18</sup>

A similar additional support is also recorded by an inscription of the year 402 BC, which refers to a ψήφισμα, which was enacted at the request of Theozotides, that the children of those 46 Athenian

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<sup>16</sup> In a predominantly agricultural society such as Athens before the Persian wars, there were social security nets: the large families provide for the surviving dependents. In addition, losses were relatively low in the archaic hoplite battles. Both aspects changed fundamentally, when – with the dominance of the naval warfare after the Persian wars in Athens – more and more people coming from the lower classes, which were lacking those security nets, served as soldiers. Furthermore, the losses could assume quite massive proportions. It is quite probable that the state care for orphans – as well as the above-mentioned care for invalids – was introduced around the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

<sup>17</sup> The public funeral with oration, games and cult is also an important aspect of the state care for war victims.

<sup>18</sup> Translation: B. Jowett.

citizens, who had fallen in the struggle for democracy against the 30 Tyrants, should receive a daily payment of one obol:<sup>19</sup>

*The Council and People decided. Antiochis was the prytany; XXX was secretary; Kallisthenes was chairman. Theozotides proposed: as many Athenians as died a violent death in the oligarchy while supporting the democracy, to the [children] of these, because of the benefaction of their fathers towards the Athenian People and their manly virtue, to give to the children of these an obol a day [maintenance like that which?] they give to the orphans ...*<sup>20</sup>

Probably in the context of the political discussions that preceded this decision belongs the speech *Against Theozotides*, which was written by Lysias for an unknown client and which was fragmentarily preserved on a papyrus. The speaker criticizes that from this support only the legitimate sons (γνήσιοι) would benefit, but not the extramarital children (νόθοι) and adopted children (ποιητοί), although they required the support more urgently. It has to remain doubtful, however, whether this financial support was only for male orphans, or if it also applied to orphaned daughters, as in the Greek text the term παῖδες is used. Due to a similar regulation from Thasos (Thasos I 141), anyway, the latter is more probable.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Of course, this inscription represents an exceptional case and has to be seen in the light of the overthrowing of the rule of the 30. One of many interesting aspects is that it gives an explanation for the undertaken measures: because of the benefactions of the fathers of the children towards the Athenian people and their manly virtue.

<sup>20</sup> SEG 28.46 = Agora XVI 106A. Translation: S. Lambert. Cf. Stroud, 1971.

<sup>21</sup> In this inscription it is reported that children and parents of the fallen warriors should receive honorary seats at games; the boys should get military equipment worth three minae when they were coming of age, and the girls should get a dowry when they reached the age of 14. See on this inscription Fournier et al., 2007. A good parallel is also the decision of the Rhodians from the year 305 BC: The children and parents of the fallen soldiers should be provisioned at public expense; the boys should be

That such a financial support of the children of fallen warriors occurred not only in individual cases, but – from an unspecified date – was usual, is proven by a brief comment in Aristotle's *Politics*, where the philosopher criticizes the theoretical state draft by the Milesian architect Hippodamos and notes that the demand for a support of war orphans was nothing new, but that a law concerning this topic existed already in Athens and several other cities (Aristot. pol. 2, 8 1268a):

*He proposed a law that those who discovered something of advantage to the state should receive honour, and that the children of those who died in war should have their maintenance from the state, in the belief that this had never yet been provided by law among other people – but as a matter of fact this law exists at present both at Athens and in others of the cities.*<sup>22</sup>

This particular state welfare ended with the coming of age of the boys, whose fathers had been killed in war, when they received a full warrior armour, the πανοπλία, and were presented to the public in a solemn procession on the occasion of the *Great Dionysia* in the Dionysus Theatre, where they also received honorary seats. This is, for example, described by Aeschines in his speech *Against Ctesiphon* (154) in the following way:

*For what Greek, nurtured in freedom, would not mourn as he sat in the theatre and recalled this, if nothing more, that once on this day, when as now the tragedies were about to be performed, in a time when the city had better customs and followed better leaders, the herald would come forward and place before you the orphans whose fathers had died in battle, young men clad in the panoply of war; and he would utter that proclamation so honourable and so incentive to valour: "These young men, whose fathers showed themselves*

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crowned at the *Dionysia* and equipped with a full armour, while the unmarried girls obtained a dowry (Diod. 20, 84).

<sup>22</sup> Translation by H. Rackham.

*brave men and died in war, have been supported by the state until they have come of age and now, clad thus in full armour by their fellow citizens, they are sent out with the prayers of the city, to go each his way and they are invited to seats of honour in the theatre.*<sup>23</sup>

This ceremony shows clearly, that the purpose of the care for war orphans was the rearing of new soldiers for Athens.<sup>24</sup> But what about the other orphans, whose fathers had not been killed in war, but had perished in other ways? Did they also receive state support? Probably not. Although all orphans enjoyed certain privileges and protection,<sup>25</sup> only the children of fallen warriors actually benefitted from additional financial support. Although it is mentioned in the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Athenaion politeia* that the Athenian state paid for the livelihood of orphans, and it is not explicitly stated that this support was only for a certain group of orphans, I think nevertheless that here also only war orphans are meant.<sup>26</sup> An exception constitutes

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<sup>23</sup> Translation by C. D. Adams. Compare also Isocrates in his speech *On Peace* (Isocr. 8, 82): *For so exactly did they gauge the actions by which human beings incur the worst odium that they passed a decree to divide the surplus of the funds derived from the tributes of the allies into talents and to bring it on the stage, when the theatre was full, at the festival of Dionysus; and not only was this done but at the same time they led in upon the stage the sons of those who had lost their lives in the war, seeking thus to display to our allies, on the one hand, the value of their own property which was brought in by hirelings, and to the rest of the Hellenes, on the other, the multitude of the fatherless and the misfortunes which result from this policy of aggression.* (Translation: G. Norlin)

<sup>24</sup> Another aspect was the psychologically important assurance to the citizen soldiers that their families were cared for in the event that they would not return from the battle.

<sup>25</sup> They were, for example, freed from the liturgies, and there were governmental regulations concerning the leasing of the properties of orphans, as well as there existed a prohibition of imparting orphans' money.

<sup>26</sup> And of course, all those measures applied only to the children of citizens. Nothing was done for the families of the metics, of whom many died side by side with the citizen soldiers.

only the support for children of particularly outstanding citizens; so, for example, the orphaned daughters of the Athenian statesman Aristides were supported, as Plutarch tells in his *Life of Aristides*.<sup>27</sup>

## War widows

In Pericles' speech for the fallen soldiers, which has already been cited, Thucydides mentions widows<sup>28</sup> only briefly:

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<sup>27</sup> Plut. Arist. 27: *And they tell how his daughters were married from the prytaneion at the public cost, the city bestowing the dowry for the marriage and voting outright three thousand drachmae to each daughter, while to Lysimachus his son, the people gave one hundred minae in silver, as many acres of vineyard land, and besides this a pension of four drachmas per day – all in a bill which was brought in by Alcibiades. And further, Lysimachus left a daughter, Polycrite, according to Callisthenes, and the people voted for her a public maintenance, in the style of their Olympic victors. Again, Demetrius the Phalerean, Hieronymus the Rhodian, Aristoxenus the Musician, and Aristotle (provided the book 'On Nobility of Birth' is to be ranked among the genuine works of Aristotle) relate that Myrto, the granddaughter of Aristides, lived in wedlock with Socrates the Sage. He had another woman to wife, but took this one up because her poverty kept her a widow, and she lacked the necessaries of life. To these, however, Panaetius, in his work on Socrates, has made sufficient reply. And the Phalerean says, in his 'Socrates,' that he remembers a grandson of Aristides, Lysimachus, a very poor man, who made his own living by means of a sort of dream-interpreting tablet, his seat being near the so-called Iaccheium. To this man's mother and to her sister, Demetrius persuaded the people to give, by formal decree, a pension of three obols per day; though afterwards, in his capacity of sole legislator, he himself, as he says, assigned a drachma instead of three obols to each of the women. It is not to be wondered at that the people took such thought for families in the city, since on learning that the granddaughter of Aristogeiton was living humbly in Lemnos, unmarried because of her poverty, they brought her back to Athens, consorted her with a well-born man, and gave her the estate in Potamus for her dowry. For such humanity and benevolence, of which the city still gives illustrious examples even in my own day, she is justly admired and lauded.* (Translation: B. Perrin)

<sup>28</sup> On widows in Greek antiquity cf. Hunter, 1989; Günther, 1993.

*And, if I am to speak of womanly virtues to those of you who will henceforth be widows, let me sum them up in one short admonition: To a woman not to show more weakness than is natural to her sex is a great glory, and not to be talked about for good or for evil among men.<sup>29</sup>*

Unlike the orphans, the war widows received no state pension. So what could a woman do, whose husband had been killed in war? Basically, those women had several opportunities that mainly depended on whether they had borne children. If the marriage had remained childless, the widow returned to her father's house or in the house of his heirs, usually one of her brothers. If the widow was pregnant at the time of the death of her husband, she was under the special protection of the eponymous archon. If she already had grown-up sons, she usually lived with them. If she had still small children, they remained generally with the relatives of her late husband, because her children belonged to his family. When she entered a new marriage, the children also remained mostly in the custody or under the guardianship of the relatives of her late husband. Such a remarriage was probably quite common,<sup>30</sup> but of course, this depended on the age of the widow, because a marriage in classical Athens usually had the purpose of starting a family. As wives were usually much younger than their husbands – normally girls were about 14 years old at their wedding, while their husbands were around 30 – there were probably numerous widows of childbearing age in classical Athens; and these probably had quite a good chance of remarriage. But to which extent a widow could freely

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<sup>29</sup> Thuc. 2, 45, 2. Translation by B. Jowett. Cf. on this passage Kallet-Marx, 1993.

<sup>30</sup> Of course, the financial circumstances (dowry) of the widow played a crucial role. On marriage in classical Greece in general see Reinsberg, 1989; Hartmann, 2002. A literary example of the remarriage of a young widow can be found in the Menander's *Dyskolos*.



choose her fate is quite controversially discussed and must remain questionable.<sup>31</sup>

In any case, the head of the household, in which the widow was living, became her new κύριος, which represented her in legal transactions and managed the dowry, which the widow had regained at the death of her husband.<sup>32</sup> If this dowry and a possible further inheritance were small, and if the widow was not supported by her relatives, she could easily get into a precarious financial position. An – albeit literary – example is the nameless flower seller from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*. In this piece, she describes herself how she had to laboriously earn her and her children's living (442ff.):

*I have only a very few words to add [...]; allow me only to tell you what happened to me. My husband died at Cyprus, leaving me five children, whom I had great trouble to bring up by weaving chaplets on the myrtle market. Anyhow, I lived as well as I could.*<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, the example of the Mother of Demosthenes. (Dem. 27, 13-15; 29, 26.).

<sup>32</sup> The mandatory dowry thus represented a significant preventive measure for the provision for widows. Some Athenians, who had to go to war, took before their departure special precautions in case they would not return alive. In this regard, especially the situation of their wives (and their daughters) were considered. One example is given by Lysias in his speech *Against Diogeiton* (Lys. 32: 5-6): Diodotos gives five talents and his ship bonds, worth seven talents and 40 minae, and documents over 2000 drachmae, which were invested in the Chersonese, before his departure to his brother Diogeiton, who also was his father-in law, and demanded that, if anything happened to him, one talent of silver should be given to his wife and to his daughter, and that his wife should also receive the equipment of her room and twenty minae and 30 staters of Kyzikos. Special arrangements for his sons were not necessary, as they were to inherit the full fortune of their father as soon as they were of full. Nevertheless, after Diodotos had died in the Battle of Ephesus 409 BC, Diogeiton was not to fulfil the wishes of his deceased brother, but to enrich himself.

<sup>33</sup> Translation by E. O'Neill Jr.

It is not clear, how the woman's husband had died. The reference to Cyprus has been interpreted by some scholars as an allusion to Cimon's Cyprus campaign, but this had taken place four decades before the production of the play. The man could also have found his death as a sailor or merchant. But even if he had died during a campaign, and the woman in this case indeed was a war widow, she would have had no entitlement to state support.<sup>34</sup>

## Parents of fallen warriors

Finally, we must turn our attention to the parents of the fallen warriors. They were affected by the death of their sons in a special way, because in a time long before any state pension scheme, old people were dependent on the care of their sons. Caring for the parents was not only a moral, but even an explicit legal obligation. Whether this obligation was properly complied, was for example verified in the context of the so-called δοκιμασία, the examination of the candidates for the highest official functions. Only in exceptional cases, such as child abuse, or if the son has not been taught any profession, exceptions were allowed. Accordingly, the care, that was to be expected in old age, was a frequently cited motive to get

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<sup>34</sup> But, of course, in this case her children would have been supported by the state. Another well-known literary widow is Crobyle in Lucian's *Dialogues of Courtesans*. Her husband, a copper smith from the Piraeus, had died two years earlier, and after spending all that he had left behind, she was able to feed herself and her daughter through handicraft activities: *You can't imagine how hard it has been for us to get along since your blessed father's death. We lacked nothing when he was alive. He had quite a reputation as a blacksmith in the Piræus. People say there will never be another blacksmith like Philipinos. After his death I sold his tongs, anvil and hammer for two hundred drachmae. We lived on that for some time. I found work weaving and turning thread, barely earning enough to buy bread with. I have raised you, however, my precious little daughter. You are the only hope left me.* (Translation: A. L. H.)

children or to adopt sons.<sup>35</sup> So, if the children died before their parents, these could get into a precarious position. Thus it is not surprising that we have clear hints that the Athenian state supported at least the parents of killed warriors. For example, in Demosthenes' speech for the victims of the battle of Chaeronea (338 BC) it is mentioned (Dem. 60, 32) that not only the war orphans would be raised in honour, but also the parents of the fallen warriors would be supported (γηροτροφήσονται). And in his dialogue *Menexenos* (Plat. Menex. 248d-249b) Plato lets his teacher Socrates quote from a fictitious funeral oration of Aspasia, in which again also the care for orphans is mentioned:

*This, O ye children and parents of the dead, is the message which they bid us deliver to you, and which I do deliver with the utmost seriousness. And in their name I beseech you, the children, to imitate your fathers, and you, parents, to be of good cheer about yourselves; for we will nourish your age, and take care of you both publicly and privately in any place in which one of us may meet one of you who are the parents of the dead. And the care of you which the city shows, you know yourselves; for she has made provision by law concerning the parents and children of those who die in war; the highest authority is specially entrusted with the duty of watching over them above all other citizens, and they will see that your fathers and mothers have no wrong done to them. The city herself shares in the education of the children, desiring as far as it is possible that their orphanhood may not be felt by them; while they are children she is a parent to them, and when they have arrived at man's estate she sends them to their several duties, in full armour clad; and bringing freshly to their minds the ways of their fathers, she places in their hands the instruments of their fathers' virtues; for the sake of the omen, she would have them from the first begin to rule over their own houses arrayed in the strength and arms of their fathers. And as for the dead, she never ceases*

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<sup>35</sup> Another motive may have existed in the care for the ancestors' cult, which had to be carried out by the children of the deceased.

*honouring them, celebrating in common for all rites which become the property of each; and in addition to this, holding gymnastic and equestrian contests, and musical festivals of every sort. She is to the dead in the place of a son and heir, and to their sons in the place of a father, and to their parents and elder kindred in the place of a guardian – ever and always caring for them. Considering this, you ought to bear your calamity the more gently; for thus you will be most endeared to the dead and to the living, and your sorrows will heal and be healed.*<sup>36</sup>

## Summary

The evidence clearly shows that the Athenian state perceived its responsibility for those who fought for Athens, and that it fulfilled the obligations which arose by the thousands of men which were killed or maimed during these wars.<sup>37</sup> Surely it was not only compassion and charity, which motivated the Athenians to enact the discussed measures.<sup>38</sup> Rather also other financial and political reasons played a major role. But the fact remains, that it is certainly possible to recognize in these measures the beginnings of a Greek social policy, which was based on protection regulations as well as on welfare activities.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Translation by B. Jowett.

<sup>37</sup> One of the most important aspects of this public care for the state warriors is the public funeral for the war victims, with orations, games and hero cult.

<sup>38</sup> Clearly, these measures also strengthened the morale of the citizens. The soldiers surely fought with greater abandon, when they knew that their families were cared for.

<sup>39</sup> Thus the Athenian state took over parts of the role of the families and kin-groups, which provided the main support for invalids, orphans, widows and older people.

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